

→ THE ← PHILISTINE

ISSUE 3

SPRING 1994



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The semester winds down to a close...

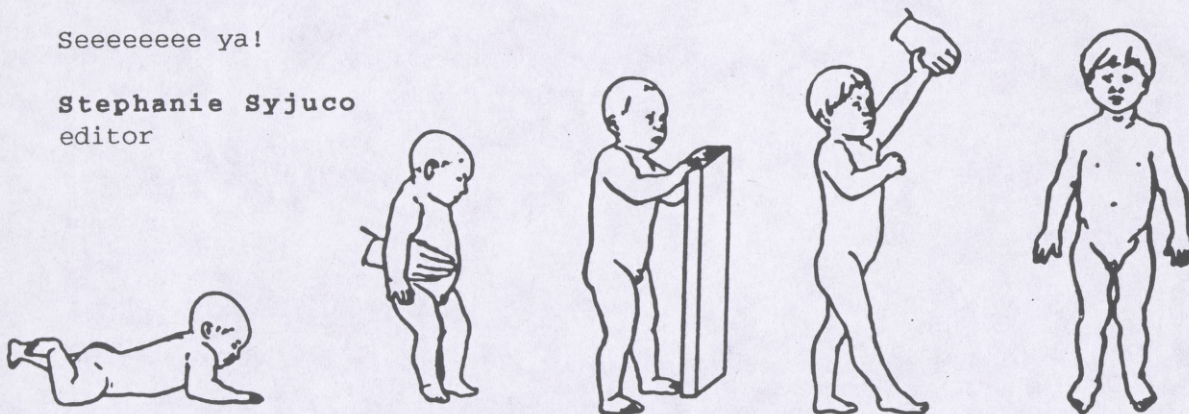
And as we all prepare to go home and leave this school behind for the summer (and quite a few of us are leaving forever, due to graduation, money loss, or *fill-in-the-blank*), let's all remember something that a school staff member warned me about: that when the halls are empty and all the students are away, a lot of administration decisions are made regarding finances. It's a little like playing a guessing game as to if and how there are going to be any changes when and if we return. So sit tight and let's all hope...it'll all be okay...*right?*

As chief editor for the past year I just want to say that as much as I've hated all the pitfalls involved in running this paper (flakey writers, approaching deadlines, flakey writers, endless folding and stapling, flakey writers, etc.), it's certainly been something along the lines of a *learning experience* --as much as I hate the term.

So with this I pass the torch along as I leave for a semester in NYC, and although I have yet another semester here to complete for my *bee-eff-ay* at the *ess-eff-ay-ai*, I bid this paper a fond adieu--I think I've had my turn for long enough. Let's see someone else give it a shot (I think Pat Brown's going to do it in the Fall, but you can still apply or be a contributing writer). All the luck to the new chief!

Seeeeeeeee ya!

Stephanie Syjuco
editor



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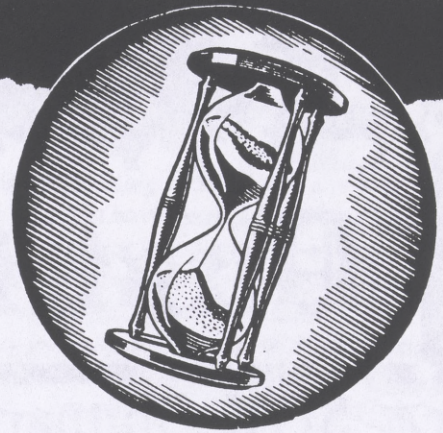
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the philistine is written and directed entirely by students at the san francisco art institute



Before He Goes:

Keith Morrison

Born: Jamaica, 1942.

Educated: Art Institute of Chicago, University of Chicago and more.

Occupation: Painter, teacher, critic, you name it in the art world and he's done it.

Height: Just an inch or two short of Michael Jordan.

Halrdo: Not much.

Likes: Blonde Scots lasses, German convertibles.

Dislikes: Filmsy remuneration?

Heroes: Frank Worrell, Muhammad Ali.

Sounds Like: A cross between Abraham Lincoln and Bob Marley.

Most likely thing to say: Four score and seven years ago.

Most unlikely: My name is Michael Caine.

Personality: Decent bloke.

Any problems: Can he stay the course?

What about the future? S.F. State will find out.

First comment author made to him: So are you a new student here?

His reply: No, I'm the Dean.

How he'll depart SFAL: Peacefully, on a Friday evening.

How he'd like to be remembered: Fondly.

--Stephen Smith

Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust...

SFAI Obituary Report, Spring, 1994

On April 6, 1994 Director of Student Services **Gayle Gonzales** slipped into a coma. As of today she still has not come out of it and remains in intensive care. The information as to what caused her coma has not been made clear (the rumor that it was Pete's coffee was proven to be false). She was discovered lying on the floor of her office late on Friday, April 1. There were no signs of physical abuse or a struggle. It seemed to be internal injuries of some kind. The doctors were unable to find the problem. She was kept under 24-hour watch and seemed to be recovering although she was still unconscious. Then, suddenly, on April 6 her condition worsened, and she slipped into a coma. The unanswered questions of what happened will remain a mystery until Gayle comes out of her coma, if she does. The doctors are confident that she will fully recover and that it will be soon. Gayle Gonzales has held her position as Director of Student Services for a little over a year. She replaced the former Director, **Mike Grady**. If you remember, Mike was found hanging from the light fixtures in his office last year. It was made clear that he was murdered but no suspects were ever found or convicted. The case has quietly been forgotten about and some feel it 's for the best.

On the same day Gayle was found in her office, second year BFA student **Kermit Davis** disappeared. His whereabouts are still unknown. He was seen leaving Gayle's office earlier that day. Some are saying he was the cause of

Gayle's current condition. Although it's usually 'innocent until proven guilty' it doesn't seem to be the case with Kermit. 'He looks guilty so he is guilty' is the feeling on campus. President Bill Barrett immediately issued a warrant for his arrest if seen on campus. It was said that he was seen recently being chased by a pack of angry women with clubs and stones screaming, "We want your blood!". He has not been seen since and no one seems to be talking.

Early in the year, SFAI lost a long time member of it's community. Director of Financial Aid **Gloria Marshall** had to leave due to serious illness. She has been deeply missed by the community but it was time for her to go after it was apparent that her illness was affecting her job performance. It was found that she was incorrectly entering records into the computer. After a few months into the school year, it was discovered that she was awarding students too much money in SFAI grants and had also made errors in the books, resulting in adding another \$100,000 to the already out of control \$200,00 deficit. Needless to say, after her departure from SFAI, Director of Admissions & Financial Aid Tim Robinson did not fill her position for almost five months, leaving a vital position in the security of the school vacant. The two staff members below Gloria (one of which had only been here for a few months) had to pick up her responsibilities without compensation and try to keep the office in order while not having the knowledge or experience Gloria had had.

In the fall semester, after a series of problems and mishaps with the school budget and finances in general, Vice President for Administration **Sandee Blechman** left a note saying she did her best and then did a most graceful swoon dive off the top of the Lecture Hall and landed on her 1993 Mercedes Station Wagon parked in the staff parking lot below, dying on impact. Many say she did a great job while she was here and needs to be commended for her contribution to the SFAI community. The investigation shows no foul play and the case has been closed, it being labeled a suicide.

Strangely, after Sandee's death, Facility Operations Manager **Andy Livak** almost all but disappeared. Once a noticeable figure on campus, always stirring up issues and pushing the boundaries of the job of an Operations Manager, he now appears to be quiet and discreet. Sandee was the person who hired and supervised him and I guess her death has had an affect on him. We all hope he is coping but do enjoy the fact that the graffiti in the bathroom doesn't get painted over as quickly.

The SFAI community was shocked to learn of the sudden death of Dean of Academic Affairs **Keith Morrison**. Keith's body was found in the grassy knoll by the staff parking lot on the morning of March 25, 1994. It seems he jumped from the Quad outside Pete's Cafe sometime during the night before. Keith had only been a part of SFAI for a year-and-a-half. He replaced the long timer Fred Martin, who was involved with SFAI administration for some 30 years as well as being a faculty member. In his short time here, Keith implemented a lot of new ideas. He was full of energy and there's no telling the changes he could have brought about. The coroners report says it was suicide but some say he was pushed. There is an investigation but the fact is we'll probably never know what happened that night. Dean of Academic Affairs Keith Morrison will be missed by some, but not all because it is no secret that there are those that feared this outsider and the changes he was trying to bring about. Keith had to deal with much opposition from those that had been here for quite awhile. Dean Morrison was questioning

the system and looking at SFAI with a new set of eyes. He may not have been perfect, but then, who is? Some may resent him for giving up and throwing himself over the edge into the grassy knoll below. However, there have been reports of a conspiracy going on in the halls of SFAI. Certain individuals were scared of what Keith was doing and wanted him stopped. Just how serious and how far would they go may never be known. As far as the reports go, it will be documented that Keith committed suicide. Keith was selected over many applicants for the job, joined one of the more prestigious art schools in America and in a year-and-a-half, he's dead and gone. It smells funny. The case needs to be reopened and investigated further. What really killed Dean Morrison? Something drove him over the edge and no one seems to be willing to say anything. It's wrong to let Keith Morrison be buried when there are still questions that need answers. Keith knew there were problems that hadn't been addressed in years, just sort of swept under the rug. The problem is that maybe he found out too much, more than certain individuals or the community wanted him to be aware of. Don't forget that this position was previously held by Fred Martin, a long standing, well-liked and respected member of SFAI. The faculty and Fred had a certain understanding of how things operate and these understandings have been this way for decades. So, when an outsider starts to question these ideas and demands change, naturally those who have been a part of the club don't like the 'new' member to threaten the order of things. But, this is all speculation. There is no proof, they're only theories and thoughts. Until a new investigation is allowed to happen, justice will not be done to Dean Keith Morrison.

From the files of Richard Hunter.

Insider Trading

or **Chattin' with Kim and Jeff**



Saturday, April 23, noon, SFAI Cafe.

Politics and pathos! In the midst of all the recent hubbub surrounding tuition hikes, Dean resignations, and what feels like a general exodus of students, staff, and faculty alike, fellow Philistine staffer Patricia "Battle-Axe" Brown and I decided to take a moment to chat and have lunch with Student Trustee Representatives Kim Owens (BFA Painting) and Jeff Richards (MFA Sculpture) to get the scoop on what it's like to be a "student insider"

(note: Kim replaced Fred Villanueva for the Spring semester, in what should be a one-year term).

Interviewed by Stephanie Syjuco and Patricia Brown.

Steph: So, how's the semester been for the both of you?

Jeff: It was a really...interesting experience, a really educational experience. (Being on the Board) really lets you in on levels of activity going on in the school that you wouldn't otherwise see--you see the underpinnings of it and see all the different interactions between Trustees and the Administration, Trustees and the Students, Administration and the students, Faculty and the students, and get an inside into all these dynamics that go on and it's really fascinating--and complicated.

SS: Fascinating? Or morbid?

JR: I find it fascinating. Because it's like this

community has it's own organic life and you're looking at these things happening and you're going "why is this happening?". You're seeing it's all these elements that are coming together, whether it's bad or good, whatever. And this place is just the right size that you can see it, get a grasp on it... I went to San Francisco State and you feel totally out of control because you have no idea of why anything happens. You don't know how to get anything done because there are so many levels of things to go through.

SS: Were you in student politics there, too?

JR: No.

Kim: I wasn't [involved] at my University either,

because the student body was so huge. There was no way.

RJ: State has 27,000 people.

KO: And the only reason you see a dean usually is when you have a serious problem, and over here you see him walking around all the time.

SS: So, it sounds like you can actually do something as a student, especially by being involved in student politics as directly as you two are? Do you feel like you have affected things?

JR: Oh, yes. I've managed to develop a relationship with Bill Barrett where I can argue with him and make him respect what I'm saying, and I could come to understand his point of view--why he was thinking certain things--and that would change my mind, we would come to an understanding. I felt like I developed a good relationship with not only Barrett, but the Trustees--many who would make it a point to listen to me and ask me questions. I had a really interesting conversation with a Trustee right before Keith Morrisson announced his resignation. She was very concerned about his situation and wanted to know what was going on from my point of view.

SS: I think quite a number of students feel like the Board of Trustees is out of touch with what students need and want--especially with budgets and cost of tuition. But from your point of view, would you say that they're really concerned about the students?

JR: Incredibly. I mean, this is a non-profit school. It's not concerned with making money. My take on the B of T is that there is a certain number of them who are just kind of milling around just putting in time--they've got their name on a list, they give money and it makes them feel less guilty about having money--but they're a minority. I'd say that most, a good portion, put a lot of energy into this. And they might not understand that much about the artistic process or about the educational process, but they're really committed.

KO: I feel the same way. They do seem really

scattered because it's so rare that you see them all in one place, but they get so involved on so many different levels, and in things that perhaps we don't see daily. Something that we did see was (Board Member) Jeremy Stone and the fundraising she did for the health hazards issue.

She got the money together for that and brought Monona Rossol here. I haven't talked to anyone who attended that didn't benefit from that.

JR: A few people got really defensive about what she was saying.

KO: I think those people might have seen Minnona as some heretic. She was in no way here to close down the school or criticize it. If anything, I feel that she was here to help people and make them more aware.

SS: It would be nice if more B of T members took time out like Jeremy Stone and came to visit the school during a time other than their meetings.

JR: Well, the thing with the Board members is that most of them are really incredibly busy people. Some of them put in a lot of time anyway. Most of them are on Boards at other places, and most of them are involved in their own businesses. Jeremy Stone is an art consultant and incredibly busy--she's everywhere--but she spends a lot of time here, this is one of her prime commitments.

KO: It does seem like students feel like the Board isn't connected with the student body or the actual everyday goings on of the school...

JR: Well, they aren't...

KO: When people talk about things like that I think, "Well, what do you want them to do? Take off from work to come in and hang out at SFAI and walk around?"

JR: And the other thing is that we're artists and they're not artists. Some of them are, most of them aren't. Their expertise isn't in art. They have an interest, but we're the experts. I mean, we've been looking at art, we've been doing art much more than most of them. Their expertise is in

"See, the faculty had a retreat and they decided--had some soul-searching I guess--that they'd get together with the Board of Trustees, and discuss the future of the school *without* the administration (being present). The faculty introduced this plan at the Board of Trustee meeting, and two days later Keith Morrison resigned. You see, the faculty essentially went over Keith's head about this meeting, and I'm wondering if that made him think 'I just can't work with these people.'"

--JR

"I thought it was unfortunate that it took a tuition hike to get people interested [in school finances]. You go all year and you know there are financial problems within the school, but the energy to do anything doesn't come until the end and you're stuck with having to pay for it."

other areas, so there's only so much we can expect from them. But the more they understand, the better--there's no question about that.

KO: But it seems like both sides are generally interested in more of a connection and more interaction (between students and the Board). The Student Union planned a little party to invite the Board of Trustees to the opening of the Spring Show.

JR: That's a really good opportunity. I talked to Gardner Hempil (emeritus, B of T) at commencement last year, and he was the only Trustee there. He didn't see any other Trustees, and when he reported back he said to them, "It's really fun! You guys should come--it's a great time!" I think if we encourage them it would help. I'm sending out announcements for my show, but I'm also going to write them each a letter inviting them to come for the commencement. I think if we do that, they'll come. At the very last minute I invited them to open studios at Market street, and half a dozen of them showed up and were really interested. Another seven of eight called up to apologize for not being able to make it. So I think if they're asked ...

SS: How do you feel about the both of you leaving and having the position filled with two new Trustee members?

JR: I hope that the next trustees have as much of a degree of interest as Kim and I have had. I've talked to other Student Trustees in the past and some of them said, "Yeah, it's kind of boring. You just show up to all these boring meetings." And I'm like, "God, you missed all these opportunities! Because the meetings are really incredible."

Pat: Well, I guess the student trustees are kind of like the Board: some of them are good, and some of them are just putting in time.

SS: You'd hope that the student positions are more select however, because the students themselves elect their representatives. How does that process work?

KO: People get nominated, and it usually happens through the Student Union meetings--that's the place for it. It comes down to two nominees

for each position and then they're interviewed by two members of the Board of Trustees, and then the rest of the Board approves it.

JR: They choose the person that they feel will be the most effective member. They look for someone who is committed, and wants to engage in the process, because they have had flaky student trustees.

KO: They want to make sure you don't come in with a huge personal agenda, and make sure that the person's got an openness and won't go in and be hard-headed. They want someone who will work with them.

SS: Is there any kind of training process that new Student Trustees have to go through to prepare for this stuff?

KO: You get a big *Board Book*. It's a big binder with all the by-laws and info on all the Trustee members and school faculty.

JR: You get put on a subscription list for these magazines... There is a national magazine devoted to Boards of Trustees...

KO: Oh, I'm glad I didn't get those...

JR: It's really awful. There are all these pictures of all these guys in suits. Some guy writes an article and he's got his picture in a suit...

KO: It's funny, because on top of being a Board member, you're required to sit on at least one other (Board) Committee. This is where all the nitty-gritty goes on. I've been on two: Academic and Public Programs, and Finance Committee.

JR: I'm on Building and Grounds, and Development--which is essentially fundraising.

KO: You go in and it's sort of weird. I remember the first meetings I went to. I felt like an outsider--especially with the Finance committee. I barely understand what a mortgage is, and they're talking about the SFAI budget! But they're really good about realizing that you're there and turning to you to ask you about things or explain things. Of course, Sandy Blechman was really helpful in briefing me. The main Board meetings were particularly strange because it was so much about all the rules and processes, and to be perfectly honest, I didn't go and read all the by-laws.

JR: You spend the first couple of committee

meetings just being quiet and watching and understanding the processes and all the personalities involved, figuring out your place in all this. Each committee is a little different.

Development committee is this really active, energetic committee, and people are just throwing ideas everywhere. You go to Building and Grounds and it's just like all these people looking at plans and blueprints, bringing in architects...

PB: Do you get to pick the committee you're on?

KO: Sort of, but they let you know which committees don't have any student representation.

JR: There should always be a student on the Finance committee. There are six committees: Development, Building and Grounds, Finance, Academic Programs, and then there's the Executive Committee, which consists of all the chairs of the other Committees. Students aren't allowed to participate in this one or the Trustee Committee. So there are four committees students can be involved in.

KO: For the Policy Committee they've actually decided to take elected student representatives. Daniel Foster and Richard Hunter are on this committee (Alicia McCarthy took over Richard's place), so they're trying to fill in the gaps where students should be represented. There's no way that the two main student Trustees could cover all the committees. It's hard enough sometimes trying to deal with two.

JR: Committees meet once a month for one-and-a-half to two hours.

KO: Finance committee sometimes takes three.

PB: So you've got six to twelve hours a month commitment. What about the big Trustee meetings?

JR: There were four this year. They had originally planned three, but filled in another because they decided that too much was going on. There's one that Kim missed which was the funnest one--the Retreat, which was in the beginning of Fall. A week before this, Fred (Villanueva) resigned. Essentially, it's a week of meetings--work. It started at ten or eleven in the morning and we had meetings until five. Then we had dinner, then there was a presentation by one of

the faculty members, and we finished at nine o'clock. So there's a lot of talk going on, and all the social time is really time when issues are being hashed out. Sunday morning we got up, had breakfast, and had meetings until two.

SS: Are any big decisions made during this time?

JR: It's mostly discussion. The first one of the year is usually assessment time. This year we spent the first day talking about bad news--this was when the budget stuff was really hitting. We had the drop in enrollment last year, and by that meeting they knew there was going to be another drop in enrollment. It was really sobering listening to all this. But it was really good because everyone came to an understanding of what we were dealing with. There was a lot of good food, you get a little bit drunk at night, hang out, socialize a bit. Certainly it wasn't boring.

SS: So aside from the budget, what were the other pressing issues discussed at the Retreat?

JR: It was mostly talking about what the money situation was and how it was being dealt with--what changes were being made. There was a big presentation by Admissions because they had made a lot of changes. Keith talked quite a bit about the plans for changing the curriculum, interdepartmental ideas. It was really about assessing where things were, where the plans were going and how they were to be implemented.

SS: How about the second retreat that just took place a few weeks ago?

KO: The Symposium.

JR: That was just a Friday thing. See, the faculty had a retreat and they decided--had some soul-searching I guess--that they'd get together with the Board of Trustees, and discuss the future of the school *without* the administration (being present). The faculty introduced this plan at the Board of Trustee meeting, and two days later Keith resigned. You see, the faculty essentially went over Keith's head about this meeting, and I'm wondering if that made him think "I just can't work with these people".

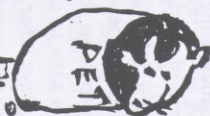
PB: Something happened in a short period of time that caused him to change

"I think that in the long run Keith's quitting will be good because the present confusing situation will galvanize the faculty, and my impression from the way they were talking at the Board meeting is that they're going to be much more active and involved. Talk is cheap, however."

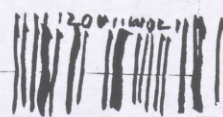
--JR



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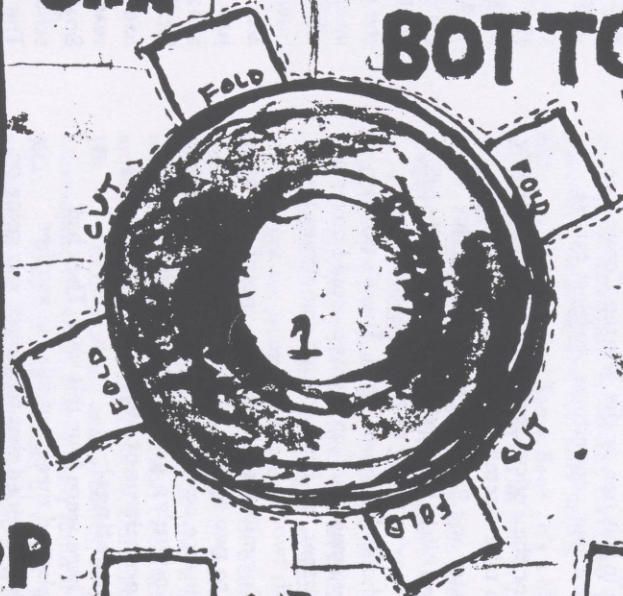
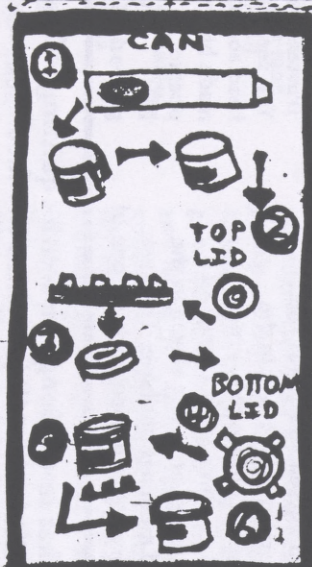
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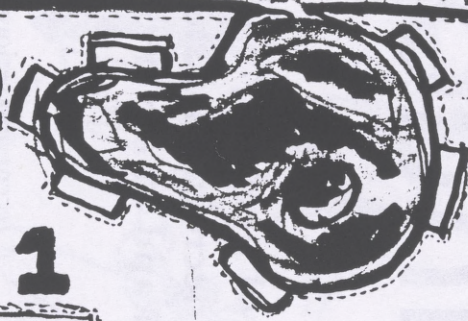
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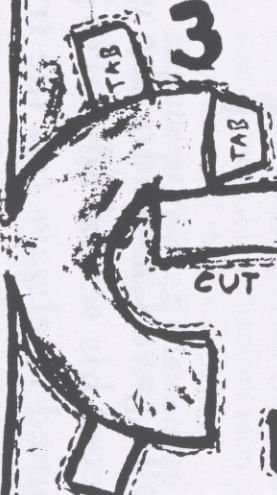
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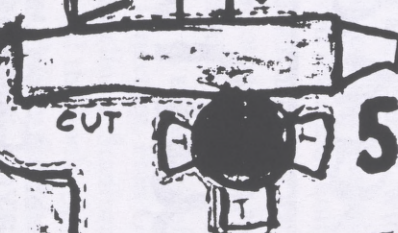
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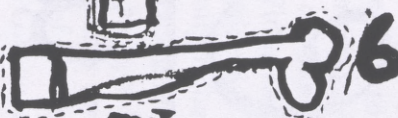
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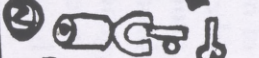
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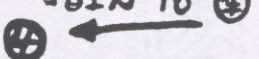
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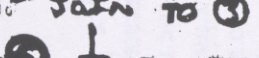
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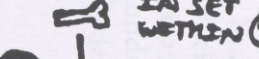
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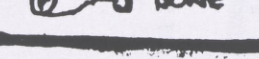
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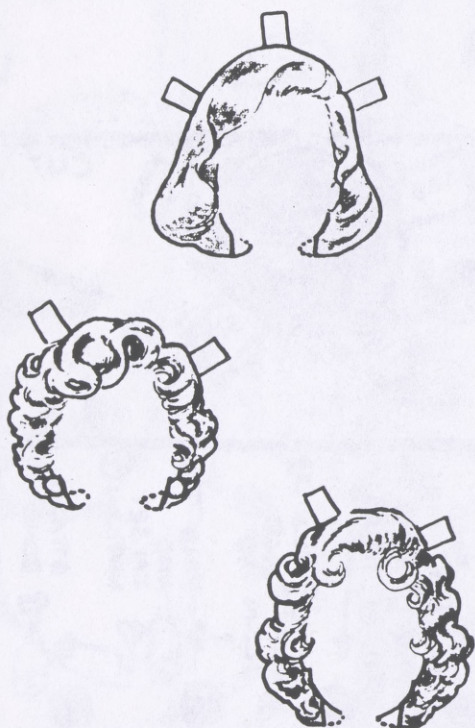
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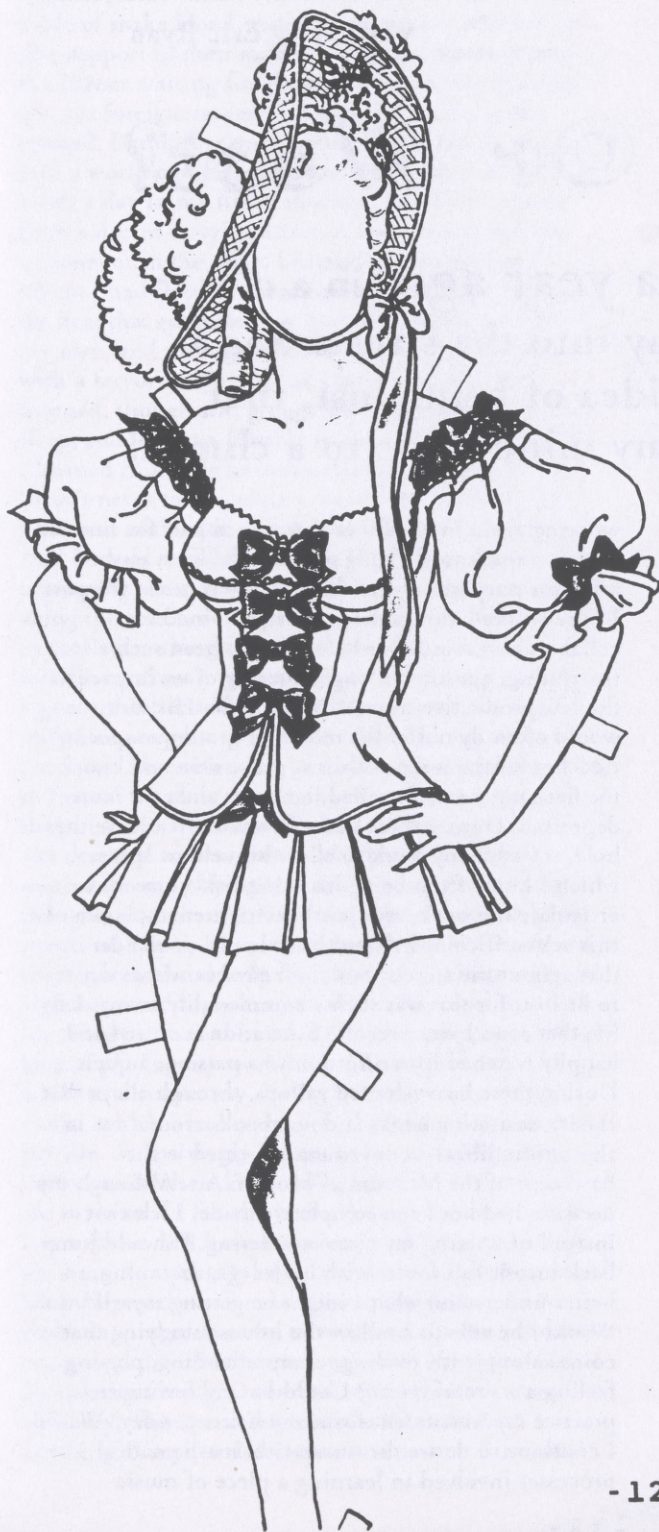
Cassandra's Conundrum

Apollo gave Cassandra the gift of prophesy. When she rejected his sexual advances he decreed that she would be doomed to always tell the truth and to never be believed.



A recent and serious breach of campus security has raised broader issues of sexual harassment and assault. One result has been the ad-hoc formation of the ***Women's Advocacy Group***. Largely organized by and composed of staff women at all levels (union; non-union, and executive), but including students and faculty, the group has been meeting Fridays at noon for the past four weeks. Initially formed to address the most recent instance of on-campus sexual assault by a student (the student has since been suspended pending a hearing process), it has quickly broadened to address women's issues generally. A three-fold mission of investigation, education, and empowerment has emerged.

Note: The Women's Advocacy Group is open to the entire campus community.



On Friday, April 23, the group invited Mary Brake, a Mediator with California Lawyers for the Arts, to facilitate the meeting, identify goals, and determine possible action on issues of harassment and security. Within the hour, two committees had formed: one to contact speakers from the community to help campus women achieve a harassment-free campus; the other to draft an agenda item to be presented by Jeff Richards (present at the meeting) to the Board of Trustees at their June 1 meeting. Fran Gibson, a sexual assault counsellor at Stanford (also present) recommended the book, *Sexual Harassment Policies for Educational Institutions* as a guide for reviewing present campus policy.

Equal Rights Advocates has been contacted to give women advice about their legal rights and to represent their interests should legal action become a necessary option.

The San Francisco Police Department has recognized the campus as a "trouble zone" and has offered to speak to campus women about safety.

Our Human Rights Advocate, Gayle Gonzales, has taken an extended leave of absence. She, along with the Women's Advocacy Group, feels that we students have a right to a safe, harassment-free environment in which to work and study. We also have the right to achieve to capacity without threats, intimidation, derision, or disrespect. The Federal Government agrees.

--Patricia Brown

SFAI--

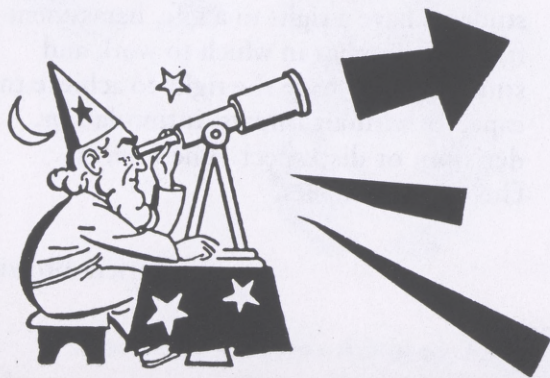
written by Eric Ryan

Is It East Or West?

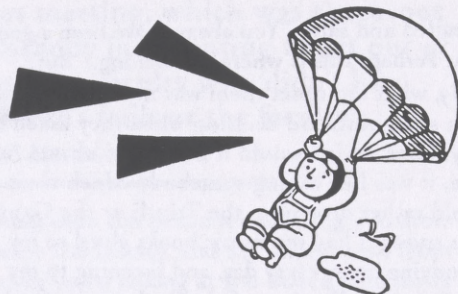
It was well over a year ago, in a city so foreign to me that every day into the streets was a new experience in the old idea of being lost, that many of the dilemmas in my mind came to a climax.

I had been cooped up in a room at the Taipei Hostel for several months with a friend who is the closest being to my other half that I will ever know. And, because he is my other half, the left of my right, the sight to my deafness and the listener of my blindness, that we were able to occupy this space, or was it a space, perhaps a void which engulfed about nine feet by six feet of a five-story building, without throwing each other over the always crowded balcony consisting of drug dealers, "escorts", and your average foreigner who needed to escape their homeland for various reasons not at all interesting to mention. My friend, also an artist, is probably the most creative being I could envision and throughout our travels together we would discuss ideas about our work, our future, our loves, our creations, our fear. Eventually, through the means of some English-speaking acquaintances, we acquired some art supplies, i.e. ink, brushes, watercolors, glue and a plethora of paper products out of the always overflowing garbage containers lining the alley in which we lived. And with this supply, we began

working again in a manner that was in part for fun and in part a reacknowledging of what had been pushed aside for purposes of traveling. Many times in the past I have worked alongside my left, or joined in collaboration, but never before had it been such a frustrating, emotional, angry sharing of workspace as the few productive months in our hole. His ideas would often fly out of his mouth at grotesque speeds, ricochet off the walls as thin as grape skin and knock me flat on my ass, stupefied, ignorant and ever more depressed. During these times I would often leave the hole, set aside my work to allow him elbow space, which I know from being his other half he needs to articulate his work, and join the frightened people of this self-sufficient hell on the balcony, or wander throughout the streets, not aimlessly but with a desire to be lost, for this was such a commonality in my daily life that soon I was over the frustration it caused and happily watched it transform into a passion, a quest. During these heavy-footed gallops, through alleys that theory, scattering books and notebooks around me in the public library, conveniently located in the basement of the Museum of Modern Art. Although my decision had not been completely made, I felt that instead of wasting my time wondering, I should jump back into it full force, with both legs, drowning, to better understand what I might be getting myself into. Would I be able to swallow the intense studying that comes along with reading, comprehending, playing, feeling a score of music? Could I stand having to practice my instrument for many hours per day? Would I continue to desire the uncreative, mathematical processes involved in learning a piece of music



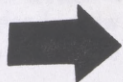
embodied everything that was strange and exotic--contained chained monkeys, grapefruits the size of an hydrocephalic infant's head, drinkers of concoctions made of snake blood, testicles and venom which is to give support to their mahood, and prostitutes around the corner waiting for these virile men but ignoring me, for foreigners were not allowed, so the police stressed. But during these walks, when I wasn't nosing into a world completely unknown to me, I would recall a day in my life, a morning in which I awoke from a dream carrying a tear in one eye and holding excitement in the other. I turned over to my lover, whom I had forgotten was next to me until I felt again the heat that entangled my body which emanated from her own, and through which I discussed this vision with a fervor unlike that of a late riser. And she listened, though still groggy from her own heavy sleep, and let out a chuckle in the direction of this tale. I learned from this uncomprehending response of my lover's never to articulate a dream that is felt in the heart and noticeable only by the vibrato in the voice. And I would recall this dream, this omen, and not necessarily the context in which it was had, as I walked along the streets of Taipei. It was a simple dream, one in reality, nothing fantastical, in which I was a middle-aged man performing before a large crowd in a gaudy theatre, with the accompaniment of a small orchestra, a violin concerto written for virtuoso purposes. My violin sang with an ease comparable only to that of the daily rituals of wake, shower, eat, work, sleep. I know from this flawless performance that I was destined to be a great violinist and the crowd's response to my playing was an encouragement to these thoughts. Simple. It ended here. Then, as I walked the streets of Taipei, I began thinking more and more about the dream and suddenly found myself pushing away the visual art world, pushing away the direction in which my other half had chosen. And with him I discussed the idea of placing my work into the background for a while to discover my desires in music, specifically violin, which I had never actually picked up before in my life. Surprisingly, or not so for my left knows me, understands where I'm coming from, he encouraged me to do so if I felt this to be the right place to go. If it is a dream, if I have a passion, nothing should hold me from it, especially not what the standard American lifestyle preaches--choose a career early, marry, have children, progress, make money, own a house, divorce, retire, and die. I had already accepted my future life as an artist and being a musician is just about the same territory. The transition would not be much of anything. Simply a dedication to a new art form, and



one of which I am not wholly ignorant for I was trained classically for eight years in another instrument, however different it might have been. So, a new inspiration suddenly seized hold of me and the time not organized for teaching my English students was now used solely for purposes of relearning music written in times I could never comprehend, for living in the twentieth century wipes out all possibilities in imagining life differently, less advanced? This is what I wanted to discover, and this is what my friend had to put up with, although not for any extended amount of time, because with this decision came the strong urge for me to return home, enter back into a stable life, leave the community of people I had to associate with in hell and disconnect with my other side, who was a great help in the moments of mental crisis though still smelt of a burning creativity that clouded my own security. I left Taipei on a common drizzling day and reconnected with the parental units back in the States a few days later.

Madison at this time of year is a bitterly cold, white winter wonderland filled with real live people who will walk the streets, jog, drive around in their car, ride their bikes, do anything outside no matter if the sun's heat has burned out and the city has turned into the likes of a polar ice cap. Nobody minds frostbite. It is actually a joke to them. I remember my father telling me how he walked into work one day, after riding in below-zero temperatures, and blisters began to form on his nose. One of his fellow workers discovered this and houted, "Hey, Rudolph! Take a look at your nose!" This is their humor and my father is learning it well. But it has always seemed to me that frostbite was a relatively serious matter and I was slightly confused by their jokes. In much the same way, I became quite confused by my parents' reaction toward the new possibility in my life that could reconnect me with music. They did not become angry or excited nor mention anything about my wasted time in Connecticut within a Fine Art department. They

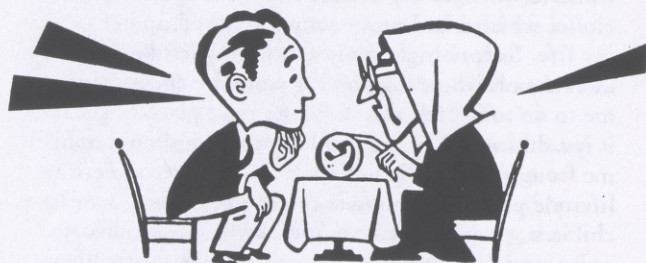
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simply smiled and said, "You always have been a good musician. Perhaps this is where you belong." But, eventually, what did upset them was my unwillingness to make a straightforward decision when they asked me, a few days later, which would it be--music or art? At this stage, it was like asking somebody which river they would rather drown in, the Trisuli or the Ganges. Yet, I was trying. I had my music books glued to my hands, studying hours every day, and listening to my mother's horrid collection of classical music, for I had grown tired of my own, to try and convince myself that this was my path. I even went to the University Music department a few times to interview with a couple of student advisors and teachers, ask their opinions and try to understand what was in store for me. And they were helpful, although slightly discouraging for I guess the music world doesn't like a fickle attitude. "Either do it or don't," their eyes would whisper to me, because whispering is all that a musician can accomplish when not behind their instrument, their love. At any rate, my studying was progressing and so was the time to make a decision. The deadline for school applications was nearing and I needed something to push me in one direction or the other. Perhaps another dream, a fellow musician to tell me not to bother, a run-in with some pretentious art student and his or her angst-warped face and paint-splattered jeans, a message from God, a bullet in the head. But you know, none of these things happened, or at least I did not recognize it as such. Yet, what I do recall is the panic that overtook me one day while studying in a triangular cafe blaring with fluorescent lighting on the corner of state street and something. Perhaps the panic was a natural effect of too many doses of espresso, or could I blame Bernstein and his horribly dry writing on the "joys of music," or was it the realization that a large part of my perception is visual and the act of creating something from nothing verges on sheer pleasure and with visual art comes a materiality, a tactile consciousness, an enthusiasm for experimentation comparable only to that of pure science which I felt could no longer be sublimated into the field of music. This panic overwhelmed my body, lifted me out of the cafe and threw me down the street, sprinting on the newly formed ice of that afternoon, Bernstein in hand, towards Paul's Used Books where the day before I purchased this "Joy of Music." I entered, placed the book on the woman's desk who I assume is the owner and said back in a moment. I returned, in what was probably less than a moment with a book on Modern Art and I could guess an incredibly silly grin smeared on my face, for the

woman returned a less goofy smile and said, "Even swop." This statement, this attitude later came into question for me because it seemed so simple, so understanding. Why would she take a book back that she had just sold the day before, lose money, for my new acquirement was a bit more expensive, and say nothing else to me but "Even swop"? I have always considered myself a person who could conceal emotion in most cases, carry a straight face in public, yet, she knew. She saw something and didn't ask a single question. A lucky day I guess for I could not have explained myself to her if she was the commander of a firing squad, bayonets pointing towards my chest, ready to shoot for my lack of understanding.

Now, I am closing on my first year at the Art Institute with several pieces of work behind me that say, "You are in the right place." Never could I have returned to a University art program for what is inherent in an art school is the dedication to a philosophy, a science, a lifestyle, a state of mind and the acceptance of individual creative processes. And never could I have become a part of a music school for this art is still heavily restricted in its tradition, its snobbery, and this very blood that it feeds off of is near poison to my system. And, in the same respect, it is obvious to me that I could not function in a world, in a job that restricts my abilities to think, to create, to question. I watch people stuck in this life, this system, programmed to be nothing but a ball bearing inside the axle of a truck, a machine part. They enter my place of employment wearing the same suit, the same tie, order the same food and follow this time schedule that leads them directly down a smooth path to death. I could gain very little from this lifestyle and want nothing less than a smooth path to my death bed. No, art school is not the easiest way to go, perhaps it is just about the hardest, the most insecure, yet I have come to the recognition that it is where I belong. ■



Special thanks to Reagan Louie for having his photography class donate to us their writings in response to the class.

"It could be that with the faculty going over [Keith's Morrison's] head, and the tuition increase discussed at the Board of Trustees meeting, which was rancorous and ugly--stupid in a lot of ways--I could see somebody just wanting to get out of this crazy milieu. The point is that there were some faculty who didn't like working with him, and whether that was Keith's fault or the faculty's, a good relationship wasn't first established."

his mind. Do you think that stonewalling from the faculty was a factor in his resignation?

JR: I think it was a factor. But at this retreat I tried to bring up the question with the faculty "What went wrong with your working with Keith?", and a couple of them got really defensive and were like "We're not going to talk about that, we're moving on from that. That's not the issue." But, we wound up spending a lot of time talking about Keith (after saying we weren't going to!) and what a lot of them were saying was that they had almost no contact with him, that Keith was too busy. I suspect that he was too busy being involved with dealing with money problems and with dealing with Barrett. I suspect that there was some stonewalling from the faculty, but I don't know. I certainly got the impression that some of the faculty didn't like him a lot, and quite a few were ambivalent. So obviously a communicative relationship wasn't established [between faculty and Keith].

SS: Well, a lot of people feel like he owes an explanation about his resignation. Other than that short paragraph letter that stuck in the student mailboxes, which didn't really explain his reason for leaving (but that he did love SFAI!), the students don't have a direct answer.

PB: I heard he really liked it here, so it must have been something pretty bizarre and specific that made him want to run out of here.

JR: SF State offered him a Deanship and he originally refused. It could be that with the faculty going over his head, and the tuition increase discussed at the Board of Trustees meeting, which was rancorous and ugly--stupid in a lot of ways--I could see somebody just wanting to get out of this crazy milieu. The point is that there were some faculty who didn't like working with him, and whether that was Keith's fault or the faculty's, a good relationship wasn't first established. So, the faculty now want the new dean to come from within the faculty, which I think is a wise decision. I think that in the long run Keith's quitting will be

good because the present confusing situation will galvanize the faculty, and my impression from the way they were talking at the Board meeting is that they're going to be much more active and involved. Talk is cheap, however. But there are things going on now that I'm not privy to.

PB: I think it must be hard to come in from the outside. Gayle Gonzalez is one example who wound up getting devoured by the cannibals.

JR: That was one of the points at the faculty symposium--that this is such an intense place and there are so many factors at work, that someone who just comes in will be lost. They want to have a new Dean by commencement.

KO: There's a committee with students on it that's in the process of picking a new dean.

JR: Richard Shaw, a Board Member and Ceramics teacher at UC Berkeley brought up an interesting point. Remember last year when the Berkeley MFA program was going to be axed? Everyone heard about it, but they saved it. Richard said that on average they get about four hundred MFA applicants. This year they got 80. If the word gets out that the Dean has quit and it goes on for a while, SFAI needs damage control. It'll affect fundraising, enrollment, etc.

PB: Have you heard any speculation about who will be the next Dean?

JR: One name kept coming up, but we can't be sure.

KO: The Academic and Public Programs committee basically spent all of its last meeting talking about the Dean situation, and Pat Klein and Pegan Brooke were both there along with Jack Fulton and Richard Berger. Pegan really pushed this multi-dean model, where there would be four people working together and one of them would act as Dean.

JR: The reasons behind all that--the problem that Keith had was that he was too busy. The question that Pegan brought up at that symposium was "Is the Dean's job too big for one person?"

PB: Apparently, the (original deal with Keith) was that they decided they wanted a

painting Dean and so part of the deal was that he was only here four days a week to take a day off to paint.

JR: That's one of the problems: if they bring in one of the faculty--a working artist--is that person going to sacrifice their career to be a Dean and not teach?

SS: I had a friend in Keith's painting class and she said half the time he couldn't show up. He would fill in with substitutes and she felt cheated with that class. Fred Martin taught Art History, but he hadn't taught studio courses for a while.

PB: Fred Martin practically lived here.

JR: What was brought up at the faculty meeting was that we can't expect another Fred Martin who worked a hundred-hour week. This was his life. You can't expect that. And again, being a student trustee, I got the "in" on all this. At the beginning of the meeting I made a list of all the people in attendance who just weren't going to budge from their positions, and a list of the people who were looking for change. And it was interesting because at the end of the day it was changing, and some of the "boulder-block" type of people were actually moving, which I felt really good about.

KO: Well, even in the Academic and Public Programs committee there were faculty members there that were like, "Oh, there's no way..." and, "This won't work," and wanting to walk out, but it's amazing how people will change. Which is good, I suppose, as long as you keep a perspective on how much it's going to change.

SS: Well, do the both of you feel that one year is enough for someone to be a Student Representative on the Board of Trustees, to learn everything, understand what's going on, make decisions, and then leave?

JR: Well, you spend the first quarter of your time figuring out what the fuck is going on. And then Kim came in late, and by the time she figured out what was up, we were having a tuition meeting...

KO: The weirdest thing about being a Student Trustee is that, while the faculty are in a similar

position, you're sort of the only person representing a whole group of people and their vested interests. The other Board members are not representing the corporate world or the world of attorneys. So [as a Student Rep] you're supposed to run with this information and try to disseminate it and get everyone to understand. It's the hardest thing. It's awful... For instance, when they came up with the budget at the Committee meeting which raised tuition--which happened over Spring break--that following Tuesday we went to Student Union saying "This is the proposal..." but it got stuck to the end of the agenda. People were kind of upset, but then that hour was gone and Student Union was over.

PB: Do you feel that being on the Board, you are basically advocates for the students?

JR: Well, in a sense, yes. What you find out is that the students are very diverse, and trying to represent all of them...I try to talk to students, try to get a sense of what's going on, I would talk to Board members, look at the situation, try to say things that need to be said, make decisions that need to be made, but I never felt like I'm advocating the students, because I'm a Board Member, also. As a Board Member I have a responsibility to the school, to the running of the school, and in some sense you have to separate yourself from the rest of the student body.

KO: It can be really frustrating when you have a decision that has to be made and discussed with students--your perspective gets changed so much when you understand the workings of things and you understand all these different perspectives and where their intentions lie. And to try to translate all that information to someone else...Like, Development is constantly coming under fire, but there are very few people who understand all the energy that goes into all of it. Finance Committee--it wasn't some flip decision, "Oh, let's raise tuition,"--it took a lot of time and it was a serious thing. [Being on the Board] you realize that as a student you can't just demand something blindly--sometimes it's what you need, and sometimes it's just the way the world works.

"It can be really frustrating when you have a decision that has to be made and discussed with students--your perspective gets changed so much when you understand the workings of things and you understand all these different perspectives and where their intentions lie."

SS: Do students ever come to you upset and blame you guys for things that have happened, asking questions like, "Why didn't you guys fight harder for this or that?"

KO: I've always had positive responses. I mean, people have come up to me upset, but never upset with me. It has happened during the last few weeks particularly, sitting in a few different meetings, students have come up to me...I didn't realize you had to go to so many meetings to get anything done.

JR: That tuition meeting was crazy, but as I went out, I ran into Pegan [Brooke] and Bruce [McGaw], and Bruce said, "That's nothing, you should have been here in years before." They said they've had wilder meetings than that. They've had almost fistfights.

SS: What exactly happened with the students during the past three or four weeks--when there were the impromptu lunchtime meetings in the Cafe to spread the word about the tuition hike?

KO: I thought it was unfortunate that it took a tuition hike to get people interested [in school finances]. You go all year and you know there are financial problems within the school, but the energy to do anything doesn't come until the end and you're stuck with having to pay for it. The week of, or the day before an event like a tuition increase, people get really motivated and there's a lot of energy that can be funneled into some positive things. But it's too late. I get so frustrated sometimes, after sitting through all the meetings. I say to myself, "God, that three hours I could have been down painting. I don't need to feel upset like this." So it was really great to see students come up and meet here on a Sunday and people had all these great ideas. And then it kind of calmed down, and people started saying, "Well, why don't we do this..." and it turned away from things like a tuition strike, and more into, "Why don't we have an event." But even so, people were forming committees and exchanging phone numbers--and I think for a week or two afterwards people were actually meeting in these groups. But it was the eleventh hour, and I realized that getting people together to try to get anything done is so much more difficult than it seems.

JR: There is a certain amount of awareness that you have to have regarding things going on

around you, and I think that there's a tendency to just ignore it...

SS: At the Student Union meetings, where tuition issues should be discussed, wasn't there any kind of forewarning, even the semester before, that a hike would come about, and that maybe we should do something about it?

JR: Well, that is something that we're trying to push for...Part of the problem was that Fred Villanueva was on the Finance Committee and when he resigned, that position was vacant until Kim came along. That was a period when the bulk of discussion concerning tuition took place.

KO: As Jeff said, I wasn't a Trustee in the fall. The main issue in the finance committee is of course the budget. It's followed throughout the year, and perhaps there can be a better system within the Student Union for keeping up with issues. For instance, the meetings' agenda could start out with reports from the reps on Committee meetings--a more structured agenda. ■

Jeff Richards is graduating with an MFA in sculpture and will be showing his thesis installation at the Herbst Pavillion in the final MFA show. Kim Owens is graduating with a BFA in painting and is heading back to Texas to relax.

Ode to Keith Morrison,
Dean of Academic Affairs 1993-94.

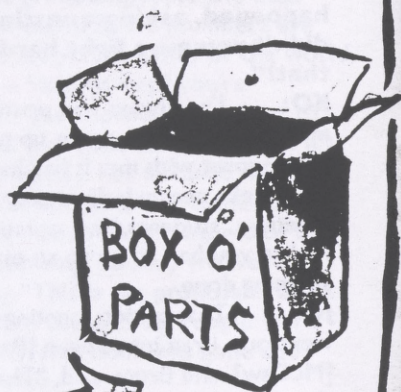
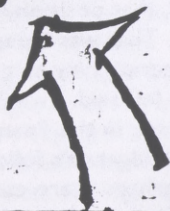
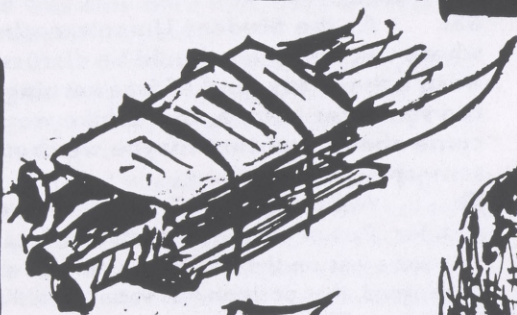
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